PB-218 255

FROM THE HUDSON TO THE POTOMAC: CLEAN WATERS

Public Health Service
Washington, D.C.

1952

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PB 218 255

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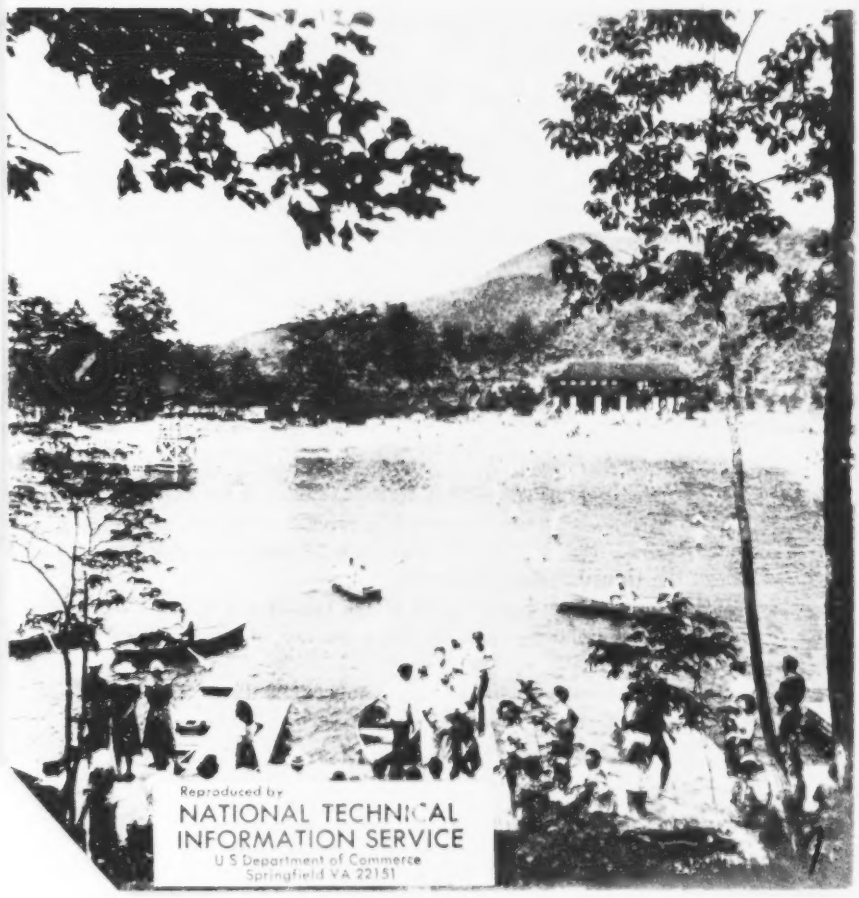

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Till taught by pain
Men really know not what good water's worth. Byron

From the Hudson to the Potomac:

CLEAN WATERS

Many of us who live in the Atlantic coast area from New York to Virginia are aware of the rising national protest against water pollution. But few of us know how pollution has affected our own rivers and lakes—what is being done about it—what else should be done.

In our area, we have a water pollution problem as serious as any in the Nation.

There is a reason. Water pollution is caused mainly by waste from city sewers and factory outlets. We have thousands of such sewers and outlets.

Our area—from Lake Ontario in New York State to the Potomac River in Virginia—amounts to only 3½ percent of the area of the United States. But in this area there are 30 million people—a fifth of the United States population.

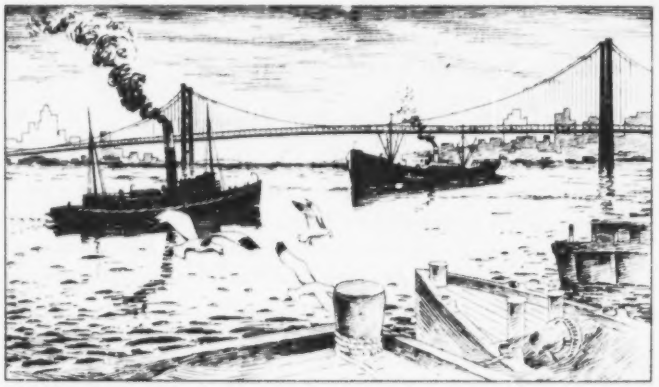
As for industry, we have a third of the factories, a quarter of the working population—and we do a quarter of the Nation's business.

This tremendous concentration of population and industry discharges enough polluting waste every 24 hours to make a river bigger than the Potomac.

The Consequence

The Hudson is one of the most scenic rivers in America. Yet pollution is a factor affecting its development as a water supply for millions in the New York metropolitan area.

In New York-New Jersey harbor waters pollution has caused an estimated $100 million damages in 20 years, to fisheries, recreation, and property values.



The Delaware is another of our big rivers. But pollution from industrial and sanitary wastes has seriously affected every water use in the Philadelphia-Camden area. Downstream, pollution from this area plus salinity from the ocean forced the city of Chester to seek a new source of municipal water supply.

The Susquehanna and the Potomac, the other two of our four largest rivers, also have badly polluted stretches—the Potomac even at the Nation's Capital.

There Is a Solution

If we were not blessed with these mighty waterways, the great development of the North Atlantic area would be impossible. Somehow, somewhere, waste from our cities and industry must be disposed of. Rivers and other waters offer a natural solution to this problem. Unfortunately, however, their capacity for diluting and absorbing waste is not unlimited. Too much waste can destroy other necessary uses of water, even change streams to open sewers.

But we can help our waterways to perform this natural function of waste disposal. By treating our wastes before discharging them to the water, we can reduce or eliminate the harmful effects of polluting materials. Many cities in our own area have already built waste treatment facilities, and many industries are eliminating pollution by treatment, process changes, or other means.

State and interstate pollution control agencies have achieved and are achieving remarkable results. They are continuing to campaign energetically for the construction of the many pollution abatement projects that are still needed.

Where We Stand on Pollution Abatement

Excellent abatement progress is being made in our major metropolitan areas. Of our ten largest cities, only one—Jersey City—discharges all of its sewage untreated. All of the other nine have treatment plants, although in seven of the nine cases additional facilities are needed. New York and Philadelphia have tremendous construction programs under way.

Of our lesser cities, about two-thirds have treatment works, but only about 60 percent of these are considered adequate. At the present rate of construction, it will take 25 years to complete the new plants, expansions, and replacements which are needed now.

As for industry, only one-third of our industrial plants treat waste before discharging it into a lake, river, or bay.

Some industrial pollution is very large in volume. One chemical plant discharges waste which does damage equal to that from a city of a million population. A single food products plant dumps untreated waste equal to that from 400,000 people. But, like many others in our area, both of these are studying less harmful means of disposal.

Besides municipal sewage and industrial wastes, the waterways of our area also carry silt—soil washed off farms, roadways, and other bared land. Soil conservationists, farmers, and others are working to reduce the amount of silt pollution in our streams.

Still another problem is acid from coal mines in Pennsylvania, West Virginia, and Maryland, which drains into streams, killing fish and damaging vital uses of water. Parts of the Susquehanna and Schuylkill are badly affected, and so are the headwaters of

the Potomac. This problem of coal mine drainage warrants much intensive research, some of which is already under way.

Immediate Action

Treatment plant construction is an antipollution action that can be taken immediately. Thanks to the work of State and interstate agencies, municipal governments, and private citizens, many of our cities and industries are taking this action now.

We are learning that no one—city or industry—can afford *not* to treat wastes. For pollution affects our common heritage of streams, lakes, and bays. It endangers health, increases costs of industrial production, kills fish and other water life, damages beaches and other recreational resources, and makes life less pleasant for all.

Everybody is a neighbor to somebody. Over 700 municipal and 800 industrial pollution abatement projects are now known to be needed in this area. Each of those needs must be met by the community or industry concerned. It is up to us to be good neighbors and support pollution abatement programs in our own communities.

Pollution abatement will cost each of us only a few cents a day. Is that too much to pay for clean waters?

When we build these treatment plants, we shall be well on our way to clean waters—from the Hudson to the Potomac.

This booklet is based on the—

NORTH ATLANTIC DRAINAGE BASINS
SUMMARY REPORT ON WATER POLLUTION

A publication of the—

FEDERAL SECURITY AGENCY,
Public Health Service

On the basis of information supplied by:

DELAWARE WATER POLLUTION COMMISSION
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA HEALTH DEPARTMENT
MARYLAND WATER POLLUTION CONTROL COMMISSION
MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH
NEW JERSEY STATE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
NEW YORK STATE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH:
WATER POLLUTION CONTROL BOARD
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